

Certificate in Counselling Skills

Course Information: 2017-18

GCS is a BACP Accredited Service (No.100187)

GCS is a member of the **National Counselling Network**
A network of counselling & training centres

INTRODUCTION TO THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNSELLING SERVICE

Introduction

This booklet provides information for trainees joining the GCS Certificate in Counselling Skills course. GCS is a British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Accredited Service and is bound by its Codes of Ethics and Practice. GCS is a registered charity and has been providing affordable counselling to the community of Gloucestershire since 1980. Since then many thousands of people have received help for personal, relationship and family problems. GCS has various venues throughout Gloucestershire.

GCS has its roots in the counselling profession and in addition to offering a large counselling service has over 35 years' experience of teaching counselling skills and training counsellors to professional standards. We offer an extensive programme of counselling training including skills courses and professional counselling training at Diploma level. Our training route leads to membership and registration with the British Psychoanalytic Council (BPC) and accreditation by BACP enabling independent practice.

GCS has a long association with WPF Therapy and was an active member of the WPF National Network. More recently GCS has been at the forefront of the development of the National Counselling Network (NCN) a network of counselling centers which provide high standards of clinical work and training.

This booklet provides information on the GCS Certificate in Counselling Skills course

Information on the three year Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling course is provided in a separate booklet. Unlike some training our Diploma course provides the client work with regular supervision avoiding the difficulty for trainees finding their own suitable placement. This is the only counselling training in Gloucestershire which provides graduates a route to BPC membership.

Professionalism

Over 60 counsellors are involved with the Service and great care is taken over the quality of what is offered in our name. All counsellors are trained to professional standards and have undertaken thorough, extensive initial training extending to a minimum of four years or will be in advanced stages of this training. Others are fully accredited by BACP while others are in the process of pursuing BACP accreditation. All counselling is supervised and all counsellors are committed to continued in-service training.

Equal Opportunities

GCS is positively committed to opposing discrimination. We recognise that there are processes inherent in any organisation, including our own, which can work against this intention. We acknowledge therefore that we have an obligation to be constantly re-examining all aspects of our policy development and implementation. We will aim to ensure that as far as is possible equality of opportunity is available to all who work within GCS or use its services.

CERTIFICATE IN COUNSELLING SKILLS

Trainee Information

1. Course Details

The certificate year provides a valuable basic training in counselling, particularly for those whose work or voluntary activities involve listening and counselling skills but also for those who may wish to pursue a professional counselling qualification. This year is designed to enhance these skills, develop ways of understanding patterns of human growth and behaviour and increase self-awareness.

At the end of the year, subject to satisfactory assessment, a Certificate in Counselling Skills is awarded. This certificate is *not* a licence to practice as a counsellor but is evidence of competence in basic counselling skills. It is an essential entry requirement to the Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling for which there are further selection procedures. This Certificate is also recognised as the basic entry qualification to Diploma training at other training providers throughout the UK.

The course consists of thirty 3½-hour sessions during the academic year from September to July. Each of the three terms consists of 10 sessions which are held at the same time and place each week with breaks for Christmas, Easter and half-terms, plus attendance is required at one Saturday workshop each term.

Each 3½-hour session will consist of:

- (i) A 1½-hour seminar, led by a Seminar Tutor. In this session there will be theoretical and practical input on counselling skills and attitudes. A programme will be given to you at the beginning of each term.
- (ii) 30 minute break
- (iii) A 1½-hour self-awareness group.

The self-awareness groups provide an environment for the development of self-awareness through interaction with others within that group. Their purpose is to explore what is of concern to individual members and the group as a whole in the 'here and now'. It is part of the group's task to identify these concerns and discover how to work with them with the help of the facilitator. This work provides a source of learning about oneself and about group dynamics. The work of the group and the material revealed by individuals is confidential to the group unless there is a risk to self or others.

Saturday Workshops – Attendance is required at 1 workshop each term, the dates (an option of 2 per term) will be sent out in literature before the start of the course. At the start of each term trainees will be notified of the date they will be required to attend.

The Saturday workshops are an integral part of the course and focus on improving counselling skills and offer the opportunity to meet with trainees on other certificate course groups with GCS. On the day you will work within small groups of 3 or 4 trainees, plus each group will be allocated a tutor who will offer support and feedback during skills practice for all or part of the day. The workshops take place at the main GCS premises in Stroud which will give trainees an opportunity to experience working in a quieter environment within individual counselling rooms.

Indicative Seminar Content

Term 1: Counselling skills and the working alliance:

Listening skills
Empathic responses
Non-verbal ways of communicating
Providing boundaries: the counselling contract
The working alliance
Counselling skills practice

Term 2: The development of personal identity:

Birth and infancy; “good enough” mothering
The Oedipal phase and the latency period
Puberty and early adolescence
Late adolescence and early adulthood; separation anxiety
Unconscious processes and defences
Counselling skills practice

Term 3: Further issues of adult life and the application of counselling skills:

Mid-life
Old age and death
Loss and mourning
Projections and challenging
How should counsellors and listeners look after themselves?
Sexuality
Couples and Families
Endings and ending the counselling relationship
Counselling skills practice

2 Assessment Procedures

The assessment governing the award of the certificate will take place during the summer term. It consists of:

- (i) Confirmation of satisfactory attendance at all parts of the course (seminars, self-awareness groups and Saturday workshops). Each course tutor and facilitator will complete an attendance register. Any trainee missing more 20% (7 sessions) during the year will be unlikely to receive the certificate. A session consists of both seminars and group. Please note the Saturday workshops count as 2 sessions and it is expected trainees attend all 3 Saturday workshops. It is emphasised that because the sessions are largely experiential (exercises, role-play, etc.) it may not possible to provide notes on sessions missed.
- (ii) Each trainee will be required to write two short essays of approximately 1200 words at the end of the first term and 1800 words at the end of the second. The subjects and guidelines for completion will be given to you by the seminar tutor at the appropriate points during the first and second terms.

The overall result of the assessment will be notified to you at the end of the course. Certificates will be sent as soon as possible thereafter or presented at an awards evening.

3 Course Journal

Each trainee is required to keep a personal course journal or diary recording his or her thoughts, feelings and comments during the weekly sessions of the course. This journal is private and does not form part of the assessment process but is of great help in enabling the trainee to reflect on the course material. In the event of a future application for BACP accreditation, it provides a necessary log of the areas covered by the course.

4 Reading List

A background reading list has been provided to you. It gives an indication of the books you are expected to read as well as those books that are recommended reading. Additional photocopied material will be provided during the course. Many of the books on the reading list can be borrowed from GCS and each course group has a book box available for this purpose. Evidence of relevant reading will be of value in constructing your essays. Management of the book box lies with the tutor. A record sheet of the books lent will be available to be filled in. Books should not be borrowed for more than two weeks at a time.

All books must be returned to the book box before the last session of the course; please note, books not returned will be invoiced for the replacement cost.

5 Support for Trainees

The course team

The course tutors are qualified and experienced counsellors / psychotherapists. They are all in practice which enables their teaching to be firmly based on experience.

Group facilitators are responsible for the self-awareness group work. They are experienced group facilitators and make available to the group members their interpretation of group activity as it facilitates self-awareness. They are also responsible for the maintenance of boundaries appropriate to this work.

Tutorials

Seminar tutors will offer tutorials to trainees during the course. The tutorial is an opportunity to discuss anything related to the course seminar material.

Pastoral Tutor

A Pastoral Tutor is available to provide a confidential space for trainees to discuss any matters arising from the course or from their personal response.

If you decide during the Certificate Course year that you would like to enter counselling and you are also considering applying for the Diploma course, please speak with your Pastoral Tutor. In these circumstances it may be advisable to begin counselling with one of the Diploma training therapists in order to ensure continuity of your therapeutic relationship during your training.

6 Course facilities

- a) Facilities for making tea and coffee during the break are provided at all venues
- b) At Stroud, the administrative office contains confidential information and is normally kept locked out of office hours. Trainees needing to visit the office during office hours should be mindful that whilst the administration staff are always willing to help they also have exacting tasks to carry out. The staff work with confidential material and often sensitive situations on the telephone and trainees should respect this.
- c) The central heating is controlled by the staff and should not be altered.
- d) Security is the responsibility of the staff, but if for any reason you are the last person to leave the premises, please make sure that all lights are turned off and the fire doors are closed.
- e) Entry to the Stroud premises is by an electronic door entry system. Trainees attending courses at Stroud will be informed of the entry code at the first session. This code is changed periodically.
- f) **Fire Precautions**
Fire doors and a fire alarm system consisting of smoke detectors and alarm buttons protect the Stroud premises. A fire blanket and extinguisher are held in the kitchen on the first floor and extinguishers are also found on the first and second floors. Trainees should make themselves familiar with the location of these extinguishers and also the fire alarm buttons. Trainees will be informed of the procedures at the start of the course.

Trainees attending the Cheltenham venue will be made familiar with emergency procedures at those premises during the start of the course.

6. Complaints and Appeals Process

COMPLAINTS PROCESS

1. In general, difficulties and complaints arising within the main areas of the course i.e. seminars, self-awareness groups should be addressed within those groups with the seminar tutor, or group facilitator concerned. This is an important aspect of group interaction and a valuable part of the course experience.
2. Where this is not appropriate or does not resolve the issue, consultation is available with the Skills Course Manager. She will be able to arrange further informal meetings as necessary to explore the complaint.
3. Failing agreement at this point the Complainant should put the complaint in writing, addressed to the Head of Training, marked Private and Confidential. The Head of Training will deal with the complaint in accordance with the GCS Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is available on request.

APPEALS PROCESS

1. A trainee wishing to appeal against failure or a decision to suspend or terminate training must give notice of this in writing to the Head of Training within two weeks of the date of the letter informing of the decision. He/she must put in writing the detailed grounds on which he/she is appealing against the decision.

The only legitimate grounds for an appeal shall be one or more of the following:

- (i) That grades have been incorrectly recorded or incorrectly aggregated or that the procedure for collation of grades has been incorrectly followed.
 - (ii) That there has been an irregularity in conduct of the assessment process and that this has adversely affected the candidate's performance.
 - (iii) That there have been circumstances which affected the candidate's performance which he/she could not or did not, for valid reasons, divulge prior to the meeting of the Assessment Committee
2. The Head of Training, in consultation with the Chief Executive, will send this submission together with all other documentation relating to the trainee to an External Adjudicator, who shall be someone not involved with the course the trainee is on.
 3. After studying the documentation the External Adjudicator may make one of two recommendations to the Head of Training:
 - a) they see no grounds for the appeal; this shall be final.
 - b) they see grounds for appeal.
 4. In the event of 3(b) the External Adjudicator may ask to see the trainee and/or relevant staff member and/or the Chair of the Assessment Committee. On the basis of this/these interview(s) the External Assessor will recommend that the appeal is upheld or rejected.

This recommendation shall be final.

5. The trainee shall be informed in writing, by the Head of Training, of the progress of their appeal at all decision points.
6. GCS shall take care at all points to ensure that the appeal proceedings are conducted in a sensitive and humanitarian manner in relation both to the trainee and to the staff member(s) concerned.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Costs:

Deposit: **£200**

Course fee (including deposit) for the year 2017 to 2018: **£1399**

Conditions of acceptance:

- On accepting an offer of a place on the Certificate course, the trainee will be required to pay a registration fee of £200, which is a non-returnable deposit deducted from the course fee. This is a financial contract with the Gloucestershire Counselling Service.
- The balance is payable either in full at the start of the course or by Standing Order of £123.40 over a specified ten month period, including a £35 surcharge.
- In the event of a trainee not taking up an accepted place the registration fee and any other fees already paid are non-refundable.
- If a trainee withdraws from the course part way through the year, the full fees for the year are payable.
- If GCS asks a trainee to withdraw from the course the fees paid up to and including that term are non-refundable.
- In the event of a trainee anticipating or experiencing difficulty in meeting financial obligations to GCS, he/she should contact the Skills Course Manager as soon as possible so that a mutually appropriate solution can be sought. An award cannot be made if there are any outstanding fees, unless an acceptable arrangement for the deferred payment has been made with GCS.

Absences during training:

Trainees are expected to attend 80% of the sessions; no more than seven sessions can be missed. A missed Saturday workshop counts as two sessions and no more than one Saturday workshop can be missed. Prolonged absence due to illness or for other reasons may necessitate a trainee repeating a year or withdrawing from the course.

Waivers:

- GCS reserves the right to cancel a Certificate in Counselling Skills course at any time if there are insufficient numbers of trainees to make the course viable.
- GCS reserves the right to terminate or extend the training agreement with a trainee in the event of the trainee not meeting the requirements of the Certificate course and/or those of GCS.
- GCS reserves the right to refuse the offer of a place on the Certificate course.

Entry to the Diploma Course

Certificate in Counselling Skills trainees wishing to proceed to the Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling will be asked to submit a detailed application during the second term of the Certificate Year. It is also possible for trainees who have received the Certificate in Counselling Skills award to apply after one or two years delay.

Detailed information on the entry procedure will be available during the spring term, but in general, the requirements are:

- a. Trainees applying for entry to the Diploma Course attend two in-depth interviews, one by an external assessor outside GCS and one by a senior member of GCS. A charge is made to cover the cost of these interviews.
- b. Trainees accepted for the Diploma Course are required to be in personal therapy with a GCS approved training therapist for the full three years of the course. Arrangements for beginning therapy are made with the GCS Therapy Advisor following the offer of a place on the course.

If you decide during the Certificate Course year that you would like to enter counselling and you are also considering applying for the Diploma course, please speak with your Pastoral Tutor. In these circumstances it may be advisable to begin counselling with one of the Diploma training therapists in order to ensure continuity of your therapeutic relationship during your training.

- c. Entry to the Diploma is dependent on satisfactory completion of the Certificate course or an equivalent Certificate in Counselling Skills course.